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Extension Service
War Food Administration
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THE 1944 VICTORY GARDEN PROGRAM

INTER-DEPARTMENT VICTORY GARDEN COMMITTEE

H. W. Hochbaum, Chairman

Last year, 20 million Victory gardeners on our farms and in our cities, towns, and suburbs produced some 8 million tons of food. This is enough food to fill 160,000 freight cars, or 800 Liberty ships loaded with 10,000 tons each. It is 40 percent of the total fresh vegetable production in the United States.

"Much credit," said President Roosevelt in his message to Congress, November 7, on our food program, "is due to the patriotic men and women who spent so much time and energy in planting the 20 million Victory Gardens in the United States and helped to meet the food requirements."

Vegetables Fresh and Canned

Besides furnishing fresh vegetables during the growing season, Victory Gardens also provided food for canning, drying, brining, storing, and freezing. A recent Gallup Poll shows that 75 percent of the people canned an average of 165 jars or cans of food, or a total of 4,100,000,000 cans or jars for the country.

Another tribute to the work of our Victory gardeners was paid recently by Col. J. N. Gage, Executive Officer of the Chicago Quartermaster Depot, when he said:

"We have the longest line of communications ever attempted for the largest Army in the history of our Nation. This necessitates approximately 24 million meals daily which are so planned as to give maximum satisfaction of taste as well as nutritional qualities which produce energy and protect each soldier from falling prey to the ravages of deficiency diseases. This has all been made possible by the long range vision of those who have made food available to the armed forces. One of the most important contributions to this program has been Victory Gardens, for without the crops of these tireless patriotic urban truck farmers I feel that it would have been necessary to lend a sympathetic ear to the food demands of our civilian population, which could have upset the best laid plans for properly feeding the Army. We know that Victory gardening has been a national success. So successful that I am inclined to believe that Victory Gardens in connection with home canning have almost covered the entire deficit caused by withdrawals of processed food for war use."

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Bigger Needs in 1944

Great as the results were in 1943, our food requirements in 1944 will be greater, to meet the needs of the 11 million men we shall have in our armed forces, of our allies, and of people as they are freed from the Axis yoke. In his memorable message to the Congress, the President pointed out:

"As our Army grows, as more men are sent over seas, larger food reserves will have to be accumulated and civilian belts will have to be tightened. Furthermore, our armed forces require more of the so-called 'protective foods' such as meats, fats and oils, milk and canned foods which are, therefore, bound to run short for the increased civilian demands."

Keep Them Growing

Though our total food production in 1943 was greater than the record-breaking yield of 1942, and though our farmers and commercial vegetable and fruit producers will do their utmost to produce still more in 1944, we cannot count on good growing weather everywhere, as some gardeners found last year. So those who have garden space, cannot take a chance. For prudence and safety's sake in helping to build up stores of food, our people will need to have even more, and, in many instances even larger, gardens, and to make every Victory Garden produce more than in 1943 wherever possible. Accordingly, our committees, and the War Food Administration and the Department of Agriculture, recommend to the people of the country the following Victory Garden Program for 1944:

I. 22,000,000 Gardens the Goal

Twenty-two million Victory Gardens is the minimum goal set for 1944. About 16 million city, town, and suburban gardens would be involved. This means that every Victory gardener, whether in town or country will want to re-enlist in our garden army and that 2-million more Victory gardeners must enroll this year.

II. More Community Gardens

To make sure that the goal of 16-million city, town, and suburban gardens will be reached, many more vacant-lot, community, and industrial-employee gardens need to be developed. Though convenience to home is most desirable, even that may need to be sacrificed. The gasoline shortage may require many to use busses, streetcars, or even bicycles to get to their gardens and grow some of the vegetables they must have.

III. Every Garden Should Produce to the Utmost

The production of individual gardens should be greatly increased over last year. Much more can be produced if Victory gardeners will plan, plant, and take care of their gardens so that these produce all summer and late

into the fall. Our gardens can and should produce far more summer and fall greens, such as New Zealand spinach, lettuce, broccoli, endive, turnip greens, Chinese cabbage, collards, cabbage, kale, spinach. They should also produce more turnips, carrots, beets, salsify, and other root crops to store for winter use.

IV. Use Small-Space Requiring Kinds in Small Gardens

Potatoes, sweetpotatoes, sweet corn, squash, and other space-taking crops should not be planted in small gardens - gardens of perhaps less than 1,500 feet. But on farms and wherever adequate garden space permits, these crops, and vegetable varieties of soybeans should be grown.

V. Many City Gardens Need To Be Larger

City and town Victory Gardens wherever possible, should be made large enough to supply the family's needs for fresh vegetables in summer and fall, and for canning and storing some of the winter's supply. The Department of Agriculture says that everyone should eat from 4 to 7 servings of fruits and vegetables every day. Probably many millions do not come up to even the minimum of that standard because of dislike for some vegetables, lack of market supplies, cost, and the ration points required. As more Victory gardeners realize how much vegetables and fruits contribute to maintaining health, and how good the vegetables are out of their own gardens, the size and yield of these gardens will be increased. A garden of only 500 square feet, though better than nothing, is small. Three or four times that size should be the goal on city gardens, and a half acre or more for farm gardens.

VI. More School Vegetable Gardens Needed

School vegetable gardens on a scale big enough to produce adequate supplies of vegetables to use fresh and canned for school lunches can contribute greatly to our food supplies and the health of our children.

VII. Plant More Green Leafy Vegetables, Yellow Vegetables, and Tomatoes

Because of the daily need for an adequate intake of the vitamins A and C, and the minerals, lime and iron, far more reliance should be placed on green and leafy vegetables, yellow vegetables, and tomatoes in supplying these health-protecting elements. Our Victory gardeners are learning how good salads are when made from vegetables right out of the garden.

VIII. More Home-Grown Fruit Too Must Be Considered

Suburban homesteads and farms should plant far more fruit for use both fresh and preserved in home consumption. Even a small place can grow some strawberries and bush fruits. Many others could also grow tree

fruits. Lessened commercial supplies of canned fruits, as well as their cost, would almost dictate that every home owner with sufficient ground space, plant fruit now.

IX. Home Food Preservation and Conservation Most Essential

Not one bit of garden or orchard produce should be allowed to go to waste. All surpluses from home gardens and orchards, or where available, local market surpluses of good-quality vegetables and fruits should be canned or otherwise preserved for use in homes, school lunches, or for welfare purposes.

X. Better Soil Preparation Will Produce More Vegetables

Early and thorough preparation of the garden soil pays big dividends. Fertilizer will never make up for poorly prepared soil. The plowing should be followed by careful harrowing and seedbed preparation then finished with a rake. Many Victory gardeners are learning what a splendid job of garden preparation can be done with a spading fork and rake, in deep preparation of the soil, and by then removing trash and fining the soil.

XI. Get Weeds and Bugs Early

There is need for instructing new and old Victory gardeners that much better crops of finer vegetables will reward their labor if the weeds are eliminated while they are still small. Every experienced gardener knows this, and also that insect pests are much less of a "plague" if he eradicates them before they multiply or have a chance to do damage. We are all learning, too, that much can be done to prevent damage and loss from plant diseases if these too are controlled as soon as possible. More than that, Victory gardeners must learn also to select disease-resistant varieties and plant disease-free seed so far as possible.

XII. A Call to Leadership

To help in reaching the huge goal for 1944, and to help Victory gardeners in their efforts, more competent local garden leaders are needed. We need to have the help of persons who know something of gardening, irrespective of the agency or organization they represent, who constitute a local garden committee, and who will take the lead in organizing and directing the work. We need men and women volunteers who will recruit gardeners, find ground for them, show them how to prepare it, hold garden schools, help gardeners to make garden plans, bring available circulars and bulletins on gardening to the attention of their garden group, conduct garden demonstrations, obtain the help of county extension agents and teachers, and in every way help new and old Victory gardeners to be most successful.